

**Winchester Parks & Recreation
Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Special Meeting
Monday, November 25, 2019
War Memorial Building – Social Hall
6:30 PM**

1. **Welcome & Call to Order** – President Bill Stewart
2. **Attendance Roll Call**
 - a. **Present:** Bill Stewart (President), Shelly Lee (Vice-President), Cal Allen, Mike Miller, Casey Stine, Hector Robertson, Andy Gail
 - b. **Absent:** Regina Coates
 - c. **City Staff:** Eden Freeman, Lynn Miller, and Samantha Crisman
3. **Approval Minutes** – October 28, 2019 Meeting
 - a. A motion to approve the October 28th meeting minutes was made by Shelly Lee and seconded by Andy Gail. All were in favor; the minutes were approved.
4. **Introductions & Presentations** - None
5. **Public Comments General**

5.1 Shenandoah University

Patsy Gochenour – I’m Patsy Gochenour and I’m not only a resident of the Winchester Frederick County community for over 85 years, but I’ve been actively involved in many aspects of its quality of life such as public schools, churches, and its rich history. Beginning in 1930 and for 10 decades, my life has been intertwined with the city park and for that reason I am here tonight. I read with great interest the article in the Winchester Star regarding the last public hearing on Shenandoah University’s proposal to manage the ball fields in the city park. One of the SU Board of Trustees said that the baseball and softball fields at Jim Barnett Park needed upgrades that the city might not be able to afford and to that comment I said out loud, “Why?” How has leadership on city council been spending tax payer’s money that they don’t have the necessary finances to upgrade one of the city’s most precious and priceless jewels, its park? Then I answered my own question, it’s called infrastructure planning and this lack of planning has been happening for at least the last 40 years, not only locally and state, but throughout our country until it is like a wildfire out of control. So, in closing, I would like to leave some positive thoughts to take into your next work session, or your board meetings, or your council chambers, or just your informal gatherings. Many say that money talks, but what about when God speaks? Render under Caesar that which is Caesar’s and unto God that which is God’s. How do you know ownership? Caesar’s face was on the gold piece. God owns everything in this entire universe, we are just tenants on this tiny planet and our lease is just for a very short time. Being able to communicate with one another, with all peoples involved in this proposal, but actually the active communication is so important. Our civilization is being threatened because people are not willing to sit down and work problems out face to face with respect. That’s the key respect. We already have a tower of babel in our park because the ones with money and power were not willing to sit down and listen and work things out. So now is the time, we have this moment now, with this proposal before us, which many things need to be worked out, we’ve got to listen and plan and negotiate, and give and take with respect for one another, but above all look and listen to the voice of God who walks and talks in this city park. Thank you.

Donna Turrill – I am president of the Winchester Royals if you all remember from the other meetings. I have an official letter for the Directors and the Advisory Board for Parks and Rec. “The Winchester Royals are in favor of Shenandoah University’s proposal to improve the

baseball and softball fields within Jim Barnett Park. The Royals have had a wonderful relationship with Parks and Recreation since the beginning of our team's 41 seasons. Bridgeforth Field is very dear to the history of our organization. The playability diminishes on the field after a full season with SU and Handley Baseball, as well as the Memorial Day tournament. Even though all organizations and Parks and Rec staff take great pride in the upkeep of the field, the grass is still worn, and puddles occur in the outfield. The playability of the field becomes a concern. The Royals organization has over 70 businesses that support the organization through sponsorships and giveaways during the game. Our attendance has improved, and our opening game last year had over 1,000 fans. Our support from the community has improved over the recent years. Having a top of the line facility will increase attendance, sponsorship and will hopefully help us lead toward a winning season. The Winchester Royals Board of Directors support the proposal to improve the fields in Jim Barnett Park and we appreciate you considering it." I also want to add that I have not talked about profit and loss concerns with rain outs for our organization. Last year we had two key games that a storm rolled in and we could not finish the game and with that we have a loss in our concession stand because of food we have to pay double for umpires and typically we have seen consistently that attendance for a rain makeup is much less than what we have if we get to play a scheduled time. One of the games last year was sponsored by the chamber of commerce and was probably going match or exceed our opening game with attendance and so having a field that we can rely on even when it rains is beneficial for our organization financially. Thank you.

Reed Prosser – Good evening. My name is Reed Prosser. I am the Athletic Director at John Handley High School. Over the past two weeks there has been much discussion of the proposed partnership between the Winchester Parks and Recreation Department and Shenandoah University. The feelings of hope, uncertainty, fear, optimism, trepidation, and excitement have been palpable in these discussions. One thing I firmly believe is all of the people involved are good people. People who are trying to make the park a better place. People who are trying to preserve the integrity of public service. I feel all sides involved are honorable and trustworthy people who want to see everyone involved in the partnership benefit. As stated in a previous meeting our purpose at Handley is simply to provide the greatest opportunity for our kids. Our fields and facilities are in dire need of an upgrade and a makeover. Too many people are being stretched too thin in our current situation. The only people who are getting shorted are our facilities and our children using the facilities. I think this is a great opportunity to provide our children of Winchester with the facilities they deserve. This is a great opportunity to reward the people who grind and sweat every day keeping Jim Barnett Park a special place. It would be an opportunity to showcase multiple first class fields. I trust that Handley's use of the facilities will be respected. I know this because I know that good people are involved. The funny thing about trust is it requires faith in order to achieve it. Jim Barnett spent his entire life making the park the place to be in the City of Winchester. It was a shining jewel for the city and I would argue the park can still be the shining jewel that we all remember if we only polish it a little bit and have a little bit of faith. Thank you.

Courtney Moyer – I am the head coach at Shenandoah for those I didn't get to speak with last time. I don't have a great story about growing up in the park like I'm sure Kevin will share or have had the opportunity to raise children in that park, but I can speak to the opportunities I have had. I was raised in a park and I remember learning to field in a park, learning to throw in a park, beating my rival high school on a field, winning a conference championship in college on a field and the experiences that I've learned from that field and how I see that now and take that to what I'm doing currently. All of the young ladies behind me on my team and the gentlemen with Coach Anderson and the retired athletes in the room probably have those feelings as well. Remembering where you learned to play and learning the sport that you loved and the experiences and the opportunities that came from that. That's what I see from this proposal and

that's what I'd like to speak to tonight is the opportunity that this would provide to Shenandoah, but also the community as a whole. Having an opportunity to provide these experiences to the youth in the area, provide experiences to the young ladies behind me and the gentlemen behind me in a way that can only get better than the way it is currently. When I think of this experience and my first couple months at Shenandoah I think of the opportunity to create a really really good softball program at a university that cares for its students and a university that cares for its town and really cherishes the pride this community has created and I hope that this experience and the opportunity that this proposal grants us does exactly that, grants more opportunities for the youth and the young athletes and the young men and women in this community. Thank you.

Kevin Anderson – Mr. Stewart, fellow members, Mr. Miller this is a very passionate topic for me having played for the Winchester Royals, I had two sons come through Winchester Baseball, coming back and managing the Winchester Royals, now in my 17th season as Assistant Athletic Director and head baseball coach at Shenandoah. First and foremost as a coach you gotta take care of the safety of your players and the safety of a field should be a priority and we're on a field in January, February, and March and the grass is dormant and you're fighting the freeze thaw and sometimes the field is not in the best condition and it's at no fault of the park at all, but the time of year that we're playing. The second factor is the amount of use that gets done on Bridgeforth Field and Rotary. For example, one team gets done practice or a game and another team is on and when you're on grass and dirt that presents a lot of problems. With turf basically with what we have shown by aerating and tinning and grooming that's a nonfactor, freeze thaw is a non-factor. So, from the safety point of view it's really a no brainer. The improvements and enhancements at Bodie Grim and Henkel Harris to assist Winchester Baseball, Handley Baseball, Handley Softball its exciting quite frankly to see the vision that could be. As you know, President Fitzsimmons, with the new Wilkins Athletics and Events Center, how that has become as showcase not only for the university but for functions in the city, I see the same thing happening for Winchester Baseball, for the Winchester Royals to attract the best players, for Handley we did a mock presentation and took all the schedules and put them into a plan and I think well I know if were allowed to do this proposal and manage and take care of the facilities, it will allow Parks and Rec to take care of the other four fields and put more man hours there and with this turf proposal I just think it's a win-win for everybody. Thank you.

Mitch Moore – Thank you Mr. Chair, I don't have much to add, but during this week of Thanksgiving I want to say that the university is grateful. Grateful for the opportunity over these last 60 days to have what we think is good discussion. Grateful to enter into conversations with various partners, to hear their perspective and to learn about how we can make it better for them. We hope as you all continue to negotiate and talk about this that you will allow us to help the city and as it has been said help the park become the shining jewel that it can be. Thank you.

6. President's Report – None

7. Board Members Comments – Shelly Lee stated she appreciated everyone's hard work and communication. She stated she hopes we can continue that with everyone and thanked everyone for their hard work.

8. City Manager' Comments - None

9. Shenandoah University's Proposal

10. Closed Session

10.1 MOTION TO CONVENE IN CLOSED SESSION – Motion to recess into a closed meeting for the discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, and if made public, the discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the City and the financial interest of the City would be

adversely affected as authorized by section 2.2-3711 (A)(6) of the state code. The subject matter of the meeting is an agreement with Shenandoah University relating to improvements at Bridgforth and other fields.

10.2 ROLL CALL VOTE

RESULT: UNANIMOUS

MOVER: Casey Stine

SECONDER: Cal Allen

AYES: Mike Miller, Shelly Lee, Bill Stewart, Casey Stine, Cal Allen, Hector Robertson, Andy Gail

ABSENT: Regina Coates

10.3 MOTION TO CONCLUDE CLOSED SESSION – With respect to the just-concluded closed session, and to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under The Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the Board.

10.4 ROLL CALL VOTE

RESULT: UNANIMOUS

MOVER: Cal Allen

SECONDER: Casey Stine

AYES: Mike Miller, Shelly Lee, Bill Stewart, Casey Stine, Cal Allen, Hector Robertson, Andy Gail

ABSENT: Regina Coates

11. Shenandoah University’s Proposal

11.1 MOTION TO FORWARD – A recommendation from the Winchester Parks & Recreation Advisory Board to the Winchester Common Council that after significant review and discussion the members of the Advisory Board recommend the Memorandum of Agreement and Operation Agreement be considered favorably by the Common Council with the following considerations and conditions be further discussed:

1. Revenue Sharing
2. Loss of Revenue
3. Ownership of Improvement
4. Scheduling/Management Rights

RESULT: MOTION PASSED

MOVER: Andy Gail

SECONDER: Cal Allen

AYES: Shelly Lee, Bill Stewart, Casey Stine, Cal Allen, Hector Robertson, Andy Gail

NAYS: Mike Miller

ABSENT: Regina Coates

12. Comments – President Stewart thanked the **Advisory board for their attention to detail, the P&P committee for a good start, and for the many hours put in by negotiating team, closed sessions, appreciate input and thought process**

13. ADJOURNMENT

13.1 With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Cal Allen, seconded by Andy Gail and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.